



Specification

CONTROLLING DATA-ON-DEMAND CLIENT ACCESS

5

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part claiming priority to Khoi Nhu Hoang's patent applications entitled COUNTERFEIT STB PROTECTION THROUGH PROTOCOL SWITCHING filed on June 25, 2001, UNIVERSAL STB ARCHITECTURES AND CONTROL METHODS filed on May 30, 10 2001, SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR PROVIDING VIDEO ON DEMAND SERVICES FOR BROADCASTING SYSTEMS filed on May 31, 2000, bearing application number 09/584,832, METHODS FOR PROVIDING VIDEO ON DEMAND SERVICES FOR BROADCASTING SYSTEMS filed November 10, 2000, bearing application number 09/709,948 and UNIVERSAL DIGITAL BROADCAST SYSTEM AND METHODS filed on April 24, 2001, bearing application number 15 09/841,792, all three being incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to data-on-demand (DOD) and digital broadcast technology. In particular, the present invention teaches a method and apparatus for controlling client access 20 to DOD services.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

A variety of mechanisms are available for controlling the access of data-on-demand (DOD) clients to DOD services through set top boxes (STB) for receiving DOD programs for 25 display on a television or other video display device. One problem faced in the video-on-demand (VOD) and DOD industry is controlling the access of a client's STB to DOD programs without using bi-directional communications. Traditional uni-directional communications, such as cable, have had many problems in controlling what services selected clients could access. The advent of the STB allowed a mixed signal to be sent with some programs being scrambled in 30 order to allow only clients with special STBs to receive these programs. However, this allowed clients who were delinquent in their payments to continue to receive service and made it difficult to change levels of service without exchanging STBs. Using bi-directional communications